

Article: Wolfgang Petritsch - Person of the Day”A Clear Message to Those Spreading Fear”

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An interview given by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to the Belgrade newspaper Danas deserves attention for several reasons. Petritsch publicly expressed his opinion at a time when in BiH's neighborhood, to the east and to the west, a perfidious media campaign is underway against the alleged "Mujahedeen-terrorist sins of Bosniaks." The Austrian diplomat was obviously not impressed by the familiar chauvinist thesis on the nature of the war in BiH, or by the new thesis about a terrorist danger coming from Sarajevo. "The Bosnian variant of Islam is the European one. I would not assess that there is a big danger here of Islamic fundamentalism developing," Petritsch said, among other things. Precisely defining social and economic problems as main causes of any radicalism, the High Representative in an indirect way sent a message to BiH's neighbors not to spread fear of "Muslim fundamentalism," (coming from BiH) where it does not actually exist. By regretting that Radovan Karadzic, the main war-crimes suspect, is still not in The Hague, Petritsch efficiently placed the focus again on the real cause of the majority of problems in BiH. Because, without the apprehension of Karadzic and Mladic, BiH will always be an easy target for all kinds of nationalism, and the dangerous political manipulation of the tragic destiny of each of the three peoples in BiH.